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5. ATTITUDES TOWARDS WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN RANCHI DISTRICT — A CASE STUDY

Participation of people in land use decisions is a new and inspiring concept in Protected Area (PA) Management. Conservation of wildlife requires the cooperation and goodwill of the people living in and around the wildlife habitat. But adopting these concepts implies a fundamental shift away from the traditional approaches to protection and it cannot, therefore, be expected to determine management practice overnight (Berkmuller 1986). Even dedicated Protected Area Managers who have successfully protected their PA against tremendous odds, against the opposition of the locals and at great personal risk, are not easily convinced by this concept. All said and done, the conflict with the locals continues to draw the attention of managers in most of India's protected areas. The situation is getting more complex with the passage of time and factors like population explosion.

Lack of resources, both man and material, are a major hindrance to the effective management of a PA, but the most important factor is the attitude of the locals towards conservation. It is not necessary that people living near predators invariably have a negative attitude towards them. Respondents to a questionnaire in Alaska, for example, had the most positive perceptions of the wolf in a survey undertaken across states in the USA. People with a positive attitude to predators indicate greater interest in protecting wildlife and natural habitats (Kellert 1985). It is difficult to take conservation action which runs against the general beliefs or attitudes

of the local people, and most decisions are influenced by attitudes rather than rational considerations. Values and attitudes are rooted in personal experience and upbringing.

The study area chosen was Karra CD Block of Ranchi district, with block headquarters situated around 30 km west from Ranchi town. Karra CD Block, one of the 20 CD Blocks of the district is badly affected by human-wildlife conflict particularly involving elephants and bears, as is evident from the number of deaths, injury, crop and house damage caused by wildlife as recorded by the Forest Department.

To investigate the levels of awareness about wildlife conservation and allied aspects, and to find out the attitudes of the people, a questionnaire survey was undertaken in the study area.

148 individuals from 25 villages of Karra CD Block, answered the questionnaire. Information regarding their age, ethnic status, literacy, profession was also gathered (Tables 1 & 2). Awareness scores were grouped as high, medium and low, while attitude scores were grouped as positive, neutral and negative.

The results from the questionnaires were analysed as follows: Answer to questions testing the attitudes and awareness were graded 1, -1 and 0, depending on the level of the answer given by the respondent i.e. score of 1 given to positive, -1 given to negative and 0 to neutral. The points for the answers were summed to get an attitude and awareness score. To test the Null Hypothesis, i.e. to determine if the central locations of

TABLE 1
AGE STRUCTURE AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION
MATRIX OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age (in Years)	Ethnic Group (No.)			Total
	S.C.	S.T.	Others	
< 20	6	20	11	37
21-30	2	19	9	30
31-40	3	14	6	23
41-50		9	2	11
>50	6	28	13	47
Total	17	90	41	148

S.C.= Scheduled Caste; S.T.= Scheduled Tribe

TABLE 2
LITERACY LEVEL AND THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION
OF RESPONDENTS

Literacy level	Ethnic Group		Total
	S.T.	Other than S.T.	
Literate	41	38	79
Illiterate	49	20	69
Total	90	58	148

S.T.= Scheduled Tribe

distributions of the two populations (Awareness and Attitude) are the same, it is assumed that their population distributions are identical. In such cases, the Mann-Whitney U test was used for testing the Null Hypothesis. Scores were compared by Mann-Whitney U test and the number of respondents in the different categories were compared by Chi-square test. Difference between attitudes scores and awareness scores was calculated as $U = 3224$ and $P = 1$. The significant difference between these two scores indicates that the central locations of the attitudes

and awareness among the people towards wildlife conservation were identical.

The tribals comprised 60.8% of the respondents and non-tribals 39.2%. To test another Null Hypothesis that attitudes and awareness do not depend on literacy ethnicity, the Chi-square test was used. Fewer tribals (45%) were literate compared to non-tribals (65%) ($\chi^2=5.65$, d.f.=1). Greater literacy among non-tribals influenced their attitudes and awareness about wild animals than tribals ($\chi^2=13.98$, d.f.=2, $\chi^2 9.78$, d.f.=2). There is a weak but significant positive correlation between attitude scores and awareness scores ($r=0.18$ $P>0.05$, $n=148$) of respondents.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the attitude and awareness amongst the villagers towards wildlife conservation are significantly different. Individuals from the scheduled tribe (ST) had lower attitude and awareness scores towards wildlife conservation issues than non ST individuals. This probably is due to their lower literacy level. Further, it was observed that literacy directly influences the attitudes and awareness of the villagers towards wildlife conservation.

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6. SOME CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING THE LESSER FLAMINGO *PHOENICOPTERUS MINOR* AND THE CRAB PLOVER *DROMAS ARDEOLA*

Concerning the lesser flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor* Geoffroy, the impression one would gain is that the main stronghold is

Sambhar Lake. This is wrong — the main breeding and later dispersal centre is the Little Rann of Kutch where a huge colony bred